

HONORING MORTON BLACKWELL

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true champion of the conservative movement, Morton Blackwell, who just celebrated his 70th birthday.

I have known Morton since the days when he attended meetings in my parents' living room, planning how we would advance the conservative cause in Virginia. We realized the fruits of those talks during the Reagan Revolution in the 1980s, when Virginia—and Morton Blackwell—led the way.

Morton's life thus far has been a testament to the kind of man he is. There is a list of rules that Morton has developed, entitled the Laws of the Public Policy Process, which I always keep close at hand. One of my favorites is number 10, which simply states: "Sound doctrine is sound politics." Morton lives and teaches by this rule. He has dedicated his adult life to serving on the front lines of all the major battles in our nation to ensure that faith, family, and freedom always prevail. I would venture to say that much of Morton's success is due to the fact that he has had a key partner in these efforts in his wife Helen, the president of the Virginia chapter of the Eagle Forum.

In addition to his birthday, Morton also celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Leadership Institute. Morton founded LI in 1979 for the sole purpose of teaching conservatives to win. His approach wasn't to sit on the sidelines and analyze policy, as important as that may be. Instead, his strategy was to train people to actually influence that very policy by directly participating in it, through activism and leadership. The more than 76,000 students who have been mentored by Morton are now spread throughout the country, in arenas ranging from grassroots organizations to campaigns at every level to elected office. I don't believe there's a doubt in anyone's mind that Morton has trained more political activists than any other conservative.

This outreach didn't start with the founding of LI, though. Decades before that, Morton worked with fellow Republicans as a leader of College Republicans, and then of local and state Republican party chapters. In a role that any conservative would envy, Morton's hard work and dedication earned him a job as Special Assistant to President Reagan. At nearly 70 years old, Morton still demonstrates the energy and activity of a young man, serving the boards of at least six major conservative organizations, and frequently writes widely published pieces on a variety of conservative issues.

As in the times when I first met Morton, conservatives have recently had plenty of reasons to feel discouraged. Morton's rules, however, also tell us to "remember it's a long ball game." Keeping in mind that the game is not yet over, we continue to fight. I was proud to stand next to Morton on the stage one month ago, as we celebrated Bob McDonnell's election as the next governor of the state we call home. As I said on that same stage, the conservative resurgence begins now, and it begins in Virginia. Americans everywhere can thank Morton Blackwell for that.

RECOGNIZING VITAL BRIDGES FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE AND FOR PROVIDING ITS 10 MILLIONTH MEAL

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate VITAL BRIDGES on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. VITAL BRIDGES, originally known as Open Hand Chicago, is a not-for-profit community organization providing food and social services to low-income people with HIV and AIDS in Chicago and Cook County.

On Christmas Eve 1988, a small group of concerned volunteers came together to deliver hot meals to AIDS patients who were too sick or too poor to prepare their own food. From this initial act of charity, Open Hand Chicago was born in January 1989.

For the last two decades and without interruption, Open Hand and its successor VITAL BRIDGES has provided food and social services to men, women and children living with HIV and AIDS.

Today, VITAL BRIDGES provides its services through five grocery centers located on the north, south and west sides of Chicago and in Oak Park and Elk Grove Village in suburban Cook County. Nearly 2,000 people receive services every month.

In addition to food services, VITAL BRIDGES provides nutrition counseling, housing assistance, case management and educational and vocational services.

On October 29, 2009, VITAL BRIDGES reached a milestone: it provided its 10 millionth meal.

Without VITAL BRIDGES, thousands of people in Chicago and Cook County would go without the healthy, balanced meals and the social services that are needed when a person is struggling to live with HIV and AIDS, especially in these economically difficult times.

So, Madam Speaker, I wish to thank Executive Director Debbie Hinde, the staff, board of directors and especially the many dedicated volunteers for 20 years of creating vital bridges of help and hope for thousands of people in our community.

A TRIBUTE TO MS. CERISA HOWARD**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ms. Cerisa Howard, a native of New York born to William E. Clark and the late Lela F. Clark.

Ms. Howard has worked with St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation for 13 years in various positions. She started as a Youth Coordinator working with at-risk youth in the community where she found jobs, scholarships, facilitated college enrollment, initiated educational trips and acquired funding resources to aid youth. Additionally, Ms. Howard has helped youth with everyday life issues and has always been available to lend a listening ear.

Ms. Howard, also, has worked as a clerical supervisor in the Human Support Department of St. Nicholas High School. In this capacity she managed clients' files, supervised the clerical staff and assisted the nurses with home visit documentation.

Presently, she is the Senior Property Manager of the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, now known as the St. Nicks Alliance, Where Opportunity Grows. She manages 275 housing units with a maintenance crew that administers repairs, upkeep, and security.

Ms. Howard is a member of Berean Baptist Church, under the Pastor of Rev. Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr. She is the Vice Servant Leader of the Pastoral Support Ministry and serves as the coordinator of the annual Thanksgiving Dinner that is served for the homeless and shut-ins on Thanksgiving Day.

Ms. Howard is a loving mother of two sons, William and Raymond, and the proud grandmother of twin grandsons, Ryan and Tylan.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Cerisa Howard.

THE BIG THICKET NATIONAL RESERVE**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the Big Thicket National Preserve consists of 100,000 acres of dense pines, hardwoods, and swamp-land. The area occupies seven counties including Liberty County and Jefferson County, bounded by the San Jacinto River and Neches River.

In 1964 the mayor of Liberty, Dumpsie Henley, and local naturalist Lance Rosier founded the Big Thicket Association; their efforts to push for national park status gained the attention of U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough. After many years of fighting to preserve the Big Thicket a bill by U.S. Representative Charles Wilson to establish the Big Thicket National Preserve was passed by Congress in 1974. The creation of the Big Thicket National Preserve was established to protect the numerous and diverse population of plant and animal species; it was the first preserve established in the National Park System.

The communities that border the Big Thicket National Preserve remain passionate about preserving one of Texas' unique land treasures. Like many true Texans, I remember growing up surrounded by the wild, free piney woods. Many summer days were spent wading in the area creeks, fishing for perch, blazing new trails, or quietly watching turtles sunbathe on logs. The Big Thicket National Preserve continues to play an important role in the lives of the people and families of the Second District of Texas.

Madam Speaker, the Second District of Texas pays tribute to the foresight of our early Texas leaders and their commitment to the preservation of the Big Thicket. I love and appreciate this preserve, and will continue to help protect its natural beauty.